

March 5th, 2020

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Christopher Bitel and I am from Middletown, CT. I am writing to the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut Legislature in opposition and support of the following bills:

SUPPORT H.B. 6491 AN ACT CONCERNING NONLETHAL ELECTRONIC DEFENSE WEAPONS

OPPOSE: H.B. 6355 AN ACT CONCERNING RISK PROTECTION ORDERS OR WARRANTS

HB 6491 An Act Concerning Nonlethal Electronic Defense Weapons is a bill that not only makes sense, but follows judicial principle. The US Supreme Court has ruled in *Caetano v. Massachusetts* that the second amendment applies to not just firearms but also to stun guns. The case was stemmed from a woman who carried a stun gun to protect herself from a former boyfriend. She had been forced to take it out to deter an attack at least once in order to be left alone from harassment and assault. When she was found to have it she was promptly arrested as Massachusetts law at that time prohibited them. The lower courts upheld the conviction, but SCOTUS in turn overturned this decision sighting the *Heller* decision that the stun gun was indeed covered by the second amendment. Stun guns are not unusual, and are something in common use. Therefore it makes sense that the CT legislature keep with the ruling of the highest court in the nation and SUPPORT HB 6491 An Act Concerning Nonlethal Electronic Defense Weapons.

HB 6355 An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders or Warrants is a bill that is eerily Orwellian in nature. On face value, its intent is to keep people safe but like the popular cliché, and as is with most infringing legislation, the road to hell is indeed paved with good intentions. The US Constitution declares certain inalienable rights that specifically limit the government's authority in power over individual peoples lives. Among those is the right to due process. The current firearm seizure law in Connecticut state statute violates this as it permits firearms confiscation without an initial hearing. The now proposed bill goes even further to allow family, household members, and medical professionals to now have the power to disarm citizens without even going through the police. I can not think of a more perfect scenario for harassment and abuse to occur than under the proposed legislation. As it is, 33% of Risk Warrant confiscations are overturned at the first hearing. That in itself is outrageous. Being that this process would be even easier for someone to make accusations without evidence, all that would need to happen is an abusive spouse or partner, or an angry family member, or even a messy divorce to enable an innocent citizen to have their rights violated. On top of all this, the bill as proposed, will also create by default an unneeded hostile event with police. As we have all seen the last year, police barging into an apartment in the early hours of the morning or late at night can end in often times horrific results. There are other states that have programs to both protect their citizens and investigate a wellness check, all without violation of a citizens civil rights. This bill is a further path in the wrong direction both in proposed state statute and police procedure. Therefore I ask that the judiciary committee OPPOSE HB 6355 An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders or Warrants.

Sincerely,

Christopher Bitel
Middletown, CT

